

# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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## WOOD RIVER MAN SENTENCED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENSES

A. Courtney Cox, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on August 5, 2010, **LARRY A. BECHEL**, age 63, of Wood River, Illinois, was sentenced in the United States District Court in East St. Louis following his convictions of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor; Transportation of Child Pornography; and Possession of Child Pornography. **BECHEL** pled guilty to the three offenses on July 2, 2010. **BECHEL** was sentenced to a total of 200 months' imprisonment. **BECHEL** was also ordered to serve lifetime supervised release following his release from incarceration, and pay a fine totaling \$25,000. A \$300 special assessment was also imposed.

According to the stipulation of facts that was filed at the time of **BECHEL**'s plea of guilty, these violations occurred between February 9 and March 7, 2004, when **BECHEL** traveled to from his residence in Wood River, Illinois, to Canada to have sexual intercourse with a minor who lived in Canada. **BECHEL** used, persuaded, induced and/or enticed the minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct while in Canada with the intent to take photographs of this sexually explicit conduct. **BECHEL** then transported the photographs from Canada to his residence in Wood River, Illinois, in the United States, on a memory card installed inside the digital camera he used to take the photographs of the minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

When **BECHEL** returned to his residence on May 7, 2004, he downloaded the twenty-two visual depictions of the minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct from his digital camera's memory card to his computer. He later used his computer to make a CD of the images. **BECHEL** possessed the CD containing the pornographic images from on or about March 8, 2004, until the CD was recovered during a search of his house on July 28, 2006.

In a voluntary statement to agents from the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), **BECHEL** admitted meeting the minor, who he knew was 15 at the time, on the internet. **BECHEL**

stated that he was interested in an intimate relationship with the minor, and therefore traveled to Canada on two separate occasions with the intent to have sexual intercourse with the minor. **BECHEL** stated that, on the second trip, he rented a hotel room for him and the minor in Vancouver, Canada. He said that, while in the hotel room, he had sexual intercourse with the minor and also took nude photographs of her on her sixteenth birthday.

U.S. Attorney Cox stated, "The United States Attorney's Office will continue to vigorously prosecute those who exploit our children. Working with our law enforcement partners, we will seek to identify, investigate, and prosecute those who violate the Child Pornography and other exploitation laws of this country."

"This lengthy sentence serves as a stern warning to Americans who travel across our nation's borders to sexually exploit innocent children," said James Ward, Resident Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations in St. Louis. "Removing these brazen predators from our streets helps protect the most vulnerable and innocent members of society – our children."

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov).

The investigation was conducted by the Wood River Police Department, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Vancouver Police Department, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Angela Scott and Stephen Clark.